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An Essay:
on the use of

Water as a Medicine:
submitted to the Faculty
of the

UNIVERSITY
of

PENNSYLVANIA.
For the

Degree of Doctor of Medicine.
March 1829.

By Joab Wright.
of Lisburg Ohio.

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The subject to which I shall call your attention is, the use of Water, as a medicine, but as this takes in too wide a range for my limits, in its most extended sense, I shall endeavour to dispose of it, by principally confining my-self to its use in a few certain diseases, and that too, for the most part, when applied in a certain form.

I shall endeavour to point out some of the indications to which I think water best adapted from my own experience and observations; yet as I have not come here prepared with notes or memorandums, for such a task, I must offer this as an apology, for this feeble and very imperfect performance

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Water a Medicine.

To understand the physical and chemical properties of water, it is necessary to study some of the most approved modern chemical Authorities

Water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen. It unites synthetically with, and enters into the composition of, most medicines of the different kingdoms of nature. Mineral Vegitable and Animal. It is capable of assuming the solid and fluid states. It is a conductor of electricity, and coloric, for which it has a considerable capacity

Water combines with various mineral substances, forming different mineral waters, well known and much celebrated for their medical uses.

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Water is a very powerful therapeutic agent, both in its simple and compound forms. It has been found to possess properties, by which it is entitled to a place in many of the various classes of medicine, and to answer many important indications in diverse diseases.

The learned Dr. Cone, professor of Materia medica of this school, has done himself the honour of introducing Water into the list of valuable medicines in his Dispensatory, in which he speaks of it, in terms with which I most cordially concur. But it would surpass my limits to treat of its various forms, as found in nature. As spring water, rain water, river water, well water, snow water, lake water, marsh water, sea water, distilled water and

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the various artificial preparations of this article, yet as it has found its way into the American Pharmacopea, I hope our country may not be last, in more fully testing its medical powers.

These hints are so hastily drawn up, that any attempt to give a regular, and systematic classification, must be subject to too many inadvertencies to be of publick utility.

Water is not only indicated in a great number of diseases, as the most important corrector of the morbid condition; but it is resorted to as an instrument to combat symptoms in most diseases, in some form or other, throughout medical and surgical practice.

Indeed, to point out all the relations, in which water stands connected

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[illegible] the [illegible] are [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible], mostly in the cases of whom both the [illegible] Epidemics and Circulations [illegible] are [illegible] relieved to reduce nothing at times.

The number of high authorities, [illegible] successfully employed the remedy, from the earliest records of our science to the present time, amongst [illegible] is sufficient to recommend it to the [illegible] of the profession, as a very powerful therapeutic agent; but the great number and variety of diseases, the [illegible] to [illegible] what [illegible] in [illegible], the difficulties in [illegible] the remedies against it, [illegible] the [illegible], [illegible], and the [illegible] of patience and attendance, [illegible] to prescriptions, have been the many means of consigning to this [illegible] a situation far beneath [illegible].

[illegible] to use [illegible] of [illegible], as
it was up to the bath is a [illegible] hypothesis,
yet as there are [illegible] authorities, [illegible] such
[illegible] evidence, as [illegible] to [illegible], the im-
portance [illegible] [illegible] 86.

In the case in which water has been
employed, for the [illegible] part, and we
believe it has been [illegible] in the
[illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible],
with no [illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
to the [illegible].

Hydropathic treatment is a [illegible]
and we [illegible] [illegible] with [illegible]
water to the [illegible], and various parts of the
[illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

Water was, of course, not [illegible]
of its powers in disease; here fame was connec-
ted more particularly with nervous derangements.

[illegible] Wallis, Hoyer and Bayard aroused the [illegible] of the English, [illegible] trial [illegible] and most [illegible] parts of the [illegible] countries [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] convenience.

As early as 1630 Millot and Clermont, of Paris, used it internally with success as a purgative.

Cold water was not [illegible] in England and on [illegible] continent, but it was [illegible] to [illegible] exhibition, it received advantage [illegible] from Dr. Hoffman's Potrifaction [illegible], or Hungarian water, and was [illegible] for years 1732.

Dr. Cullen wrote a paper which was published on the physiological [illegible] on this subject recommending the use. Tartar and Seltzer waters, were, occasionally resorted to with success.

Priessnitz recommended cold water and in many cases of hydrophobia.

Professor Hildebrand of Vienna has extensive practice in the diseases of Austria, employed the cold bath, affusion of cold water, particularly with success in the commencement of fever.

It appears that he found a manifestation of a virulent poison in the urine or excretion, that the susceptibility of the system was such, as to produce it against every exertion that will have been justly appreciated, in a lifeless state of the constitution.

Dr Weight, of Lancaster, was first a very zealous, he found out this as a means of preserving the precious powers of the vital mechanism of life, when the degenerative powers are incapable

is increasing and unstable, that weight which in case of its [illegible] becomes disquieted appearances.

Dr Currie of Liverpool [illegible] [illegible] on the [illegible] influence, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] ~~readily~~ to not [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] has been arrested in a considerable degree; but still there are only particular cases in which it would be safe. Since marking a [illegible] of difficulty to a practice, which by proper ~~[illegible]~~ attention to a few simple rules, can be as easily managed as any plan [illegible] could [illegible] that promises a happy issue.

Indeed, this great pathologist has given a more definite bounds to the manner of treatment, than any of his predecessors. [illegible] it does not follow hence, that he has

accomplished [illegible] of accuracy and definition as relates to its successful application in Chorea and all other diseases to which it is more especially appropriate.

Nor is it alone in its exciting the mind in other directions [illegible] [illegible] which [illegible] other [illegible] [illegible].

It has been extensively used in cynanche maligna, or putrid sore throat. We have, by combining this with other constitu=tive means, proved it in the disease allu=ded with signal success.

Notwithstanding writers of this age and pathologists have been unable to give a satisfac=tory solution of its modus operandi in ans=wering the respective indications to which it has been so successfully applied; but Dr Currie seems to have proven the manner

[illegible] which all cases should be directed are the application of large remedial agents.

I have not attempted a complete history of the disease, but only to a very limited extent. Neither is it my object, in the following remarks, to trace the morbid condition, or the diseases to which it is related in a consecutive manner.

I have carried out a course of cases, in which I have tried the bath, that the skin was remarked, and a more present and speedy intervention, and cases of remittent and continued fever, obtained by this treatment a very opposite result. When the intermission occurs at a certain period, your chance is much better for cleansing the stomach by emetics, cathartics &c. and, if there be no contra indication, give the quinine in large doses, at once on the injection of the paroxysm.

[illegible] times I have [illegible] used, [illegible] giving the bath in case of [illegible] was made [illegible] the greatest [illegible]. In [illegible] [illegible] where the disease has been of long [illegible] or produced an [illegible] degree of debility; there [illegible] is eminent advantage, if no local congestion or inflammation [illegible], [illegible]. I have [illegible], or [illegible] cause, has [illegible] reduced the patient, and [illegible] intractable [illegible] of [illegible] with decided advantage, [illegible] being [illegible] to accompany it with stimulant [illegible].

[illegible] cases to the point [illegible] conclude by noting a few [illegible], I have applied the bath in [illegible] cases of disease, of various kinds, [illegible].

[illegible] and the opportunity of applying the [illegible] with [illegible] cases of rheumatism, of a chronic character, which yielded to it in a few weeks. And great relief was experienced in ten minutes after the first application.

The various modes of [illegible] have been used from Hippocrates to the present time, [illegible] and artificial, or [illegible], in Japan, the [illegible], the Russians [illegible] recommended [illegible] [illegible], [illegible], [illegible], [illegible], and the [illegible] empirics Graham & Thompson, the [illegible] with red pepper, [illegible] the [illegible], [illegible], having a [illegible] on the vapour bath, [illegible] a very convenient [illegible] into the spout of which the vapour [illegible] the bath [illegible].

[illegible], [illegible], [illegible],

and Falconer, the English spring baths contain so small a proportion of iron and no sulphur (except the last suspected sulphur, but the others deny this). That (agreable to Dr Saunders' notion) its effects must depend, principally, on the temperature of the water.

Dr Currie formerly made his time to exclude the claims of all who had any sense of chillings or general or profuse perspiration. He observes, that it might be carried so far as to extinguish animation entirely. Yet no part of this precaution ought to deprive a patient of the benefits, even of a shower bath. It is true, it would be very possible to distroy any person with too long confinement in or under a shower of cold water. Yet if the system be properly prepared, by appropriate stimulants given either by injections or the common way, or by warming by the vapour bath in

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addition to the above stimulants, the system may not only be in a degree chilly, but it may be in as profuse a state of general perspiration as it is proper to excite for any purpose. It is very true, that in time of a regular chill, in intermittent or remittent fever, it would in the general and perhaps in all cases, be wholly unsafe, and many times, has, without the proper stimulant proved fatal; There can never be any case, I apprehend, wherein it would not be better to wait till the fever arose or never employ it atall

Ellore

N. L.

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